# Central American NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the Central American Group of the Spanish Main Society.
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Vol II, No.38 January 1990

EDITORIAL

March 24, 1990 is the date of the next Provincial meeting of the Spanish Main, to be held here in Urmston. There will be several invited displays, half the day being given over to Chile members, and the other half to various other Republics. It is also hoped to have a discussion about the Chile group and possible changes. As always, members who would like to display are very welcome to contact me, to be included in the programme. Those members who have been to Urmston before will be contacted in the New Year with full details. If you have not been before you will be most welcome, but please let me know well in advance, so that I can send details to you. Licensing laws (yes, there is a bar, and a good buffet lunch) require names and addresses of those attending to be submitted well in advance. I also need to know numbers in order to book lunch. The Urmston venue has proved most enjoyable to those who have attended in the past, and I would urge all of you to consider making the journey - it will be well worth it.

Many of you I know, use Stanley Gibbons listing to mount your New Issues, but have found them falling behind with some of their listings in SG Monthly, especially Nicaragua. I wrote to David Aggersburg, the Catalogue Editor, on this subject, and he replied saying:-

> "I would indeed be grateful if you would mention (the lack of available New Issue Information) in your Newsletter and, hopefully, this may bring some results. . . . If any member of the Spanish Main has access to such information, or can provide the address of a reliable local contact, please do let me know."

Yes, please do let him know, since my Nicaraguan New Issues are mounting up in a stockbook.

Finally, does anyone collect Mexico? I would very much like to see something about Mexican philately in these pages.

MPB

# HONDURAS: THE GOVERNMENT PRINTING WORKS' ISSUES

by JOSE T MEJIA

During the last few years, I have been gathering information about the Honduras Government Printing Works' (GPW) issues. Primarily, I am interested in the production methods used by them, but to make the pieces of the Honduras puzzle fit together, I need commentaries from our readers.

After the Seebeck issues were demonetised on December 31, 1895, the Honduras government started printing its own stamps. Between 1896 and 1933, the GPW printed seventeen issues for a total of ninety one stamps (see table).

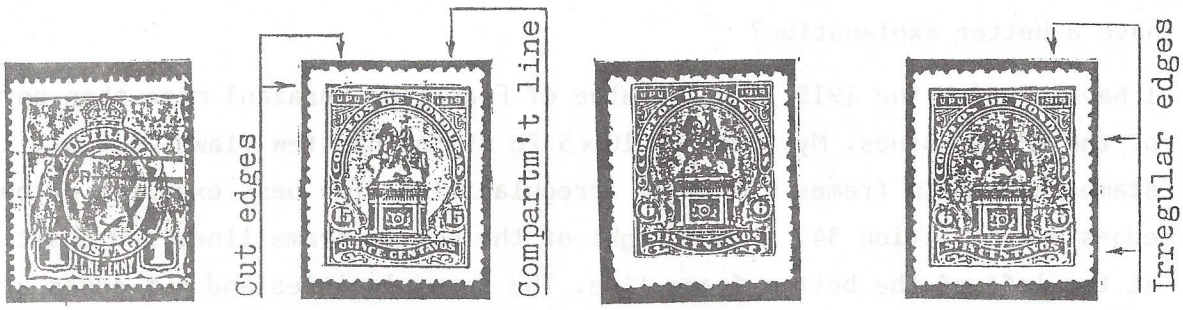
The GPW was called the 'National Lithography' (Litografia Nacional). This name was changed to 'National Lithography and Photo-engraving' (Litografia y Foto-grabados Nacionales) before November 1926. The word 'lithography' apparently has misled several stamp catalogues which listed all stamps made by the GPW as printed by lithography. The GPW did print stamps by lithography, but also by typography (letterpress) and by photo-engraving.

I believe that only the first five issues were printed by lithography. Starting with the 1915 issue (Ulua Bridge and Bonilla Theatre, SG 167-77, Scott 174-181), the stamps were printed by typography with two possible exceptions: the 1930 Government Gazette (SG 311-3, Scott 295-7) and the D Herrera monument (SG 267, Scott 279), printed for use in 1924-28, but never issued, then surcharged and issued in 1929. The 1929 issue, President Colindres and V P Chavez, was also printed by typography, but using a combination line and half-tone photo-engraving process.

Many of the stamps printed by typography exhibit varieties alike to the "compartment lines" and the "cut edges" described by L N and M Williams in Fundamentals of Philately. The existence of these varieties suggests that the transfer process was made by applying pressure. The GPW could have multiplied the designs from a die by means of a transfer roll or a punch. These varieties are constant and may be used for plating the stamps as I am doing, and other collectors have done.

A transfer roll is generally associated with the Perkins Bacon & Co. intaglio process. The use of the same process for the production of printing plates for typography is unusual, but it was employed by Perkins Bacon for some stamps of Australia and New Zealand (Australia 1914 1d, and New Zealand 1909-12 ½d and 1d).

Could Honduras have printed its stamps by a process similar to the Perkins Bacon process used for printing the Australia and New Zealand stamps? In my opinion the answer depends on how the cut edges and compartment lines are formed.



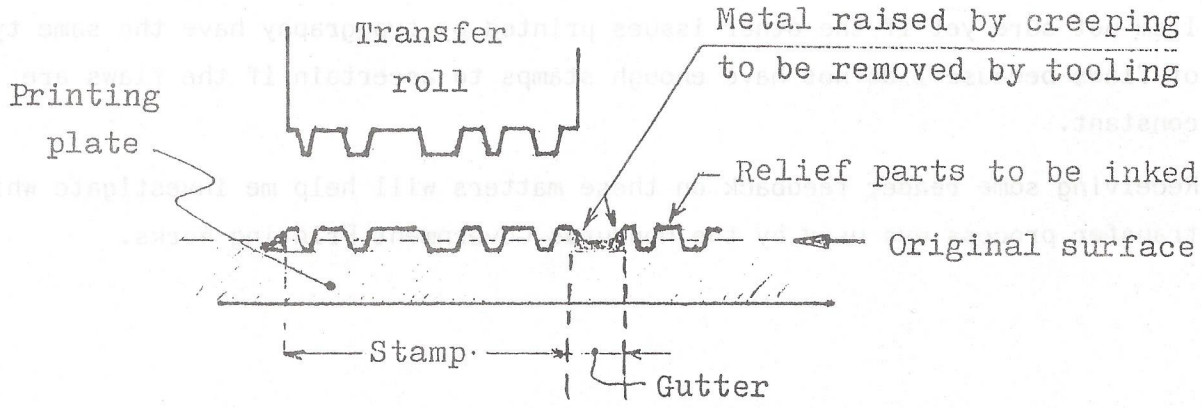

Australia 1914 | Honduras 1919 | No-frame variety | Normal frame

How "cut edges" and "compartment lines" are formed.

Explaining the application of the Perkins Die and Mill process for producing printing plates for typography, James D Heath, managing director of Perkins Bacon & Co. read the following to the Royal Philatelic Society, London, on February 6, 1913.

> "Another trouble is the clearing out of the margins between the stamps. In recess printing (intaglio) the metal raised by creeping can be left as it is, as the printer will wipe it clean; but in surface printing (typography) the metal must be removed entirely, and grooves as deep as possible left, otherwise the spaces between the stamps will appear dirty, and bits of metal left catching the ink from the inking roller. We have a special machine for cutting these grooves, but even with this it is a tedious job, requiring great care, lest the edges of the stamps be damaged."

Since the workmanship of the Honduras 1919 issue is poor, the GPW probably used a 'primitive' Honduran transferring process and used a hand tool for cutting away the gutters. All the stamps of the 1919 issue have some irregularities on the frame lines and the cut edges and compartment lines are abundant.



Of course, these flaws are indirect evidence that the Government Printing Works used a process that required pressure to multiply the design. Do our readers have a better explanation?

I have studied the 1919 issue (Statue of Francisco Morazan) more than any other of the GPW's issues. My sheet of 10 x 5 2c stamps has few flaws, but all the stamps have thin frames with many irregularities. The best examples of cut edges are: position 34, at the right of the bottom frame line, and position 49, at the left of the bottom frame line. The irregularities and cut edges are constant; I am plating the overprints on these stamps by using these flaws as a guide to basic positions on the sheet.

My 10c 5 x 5 sheet has notorious cut edges at positions:-

3: centre of the top frame line
7: upper left corner
16: upper half of the left frame line
19: upper right corner

and compartment lines at positions:-

3: upper right frame line
20: upper left corner

I have two 15c 10 x 5 sheets (blue and deep violet). Both have the same cut edges at positions:-

9: lower left frame line
23: upper left frame line
31: upper left corner

and compartment lines at positions:-

3: upper frame line
20: upper frame line
27: upper frame line
29: bottom frame line
31: left frame line
50: upper frame line

The same type of flaws are found on the 1915 issue (Ulua Bridge and Bonilla Theatre), the 1920 (Assumption of power by General Gutierrez), 1925 (President Paz Baraona), 1927-29 (Honduras topics) and 1929 (President Colindres).

I am not sure yet if the other issues printed by typography have the same type of flaws because I do not have enough stamps to ascertain if the flaws are constant.

Receiving some reader feedback on these matters will help me investigate which transfer process was used by the Honduras Government Printing Works.

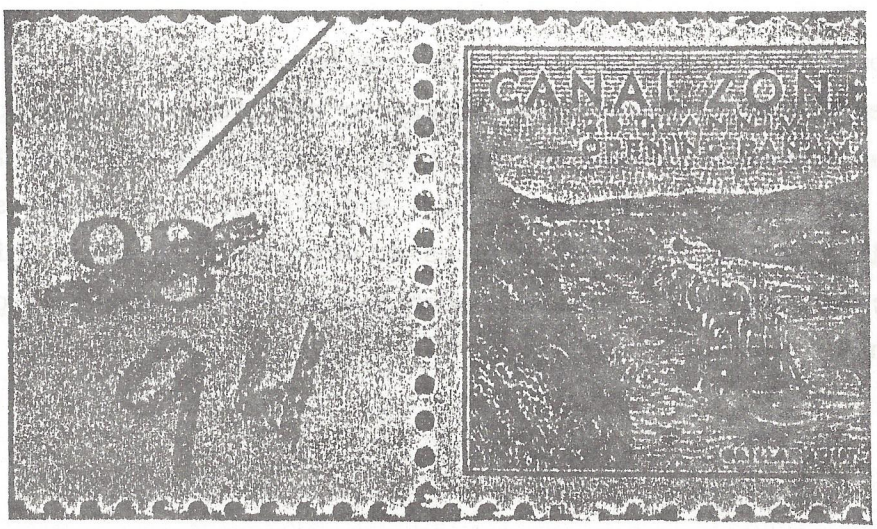
Honduras: Government Printing Works' Issues

| Item | SG | Scott | | Issue | Set | Print method SG | Sc | Wmk |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 100-07 | 95-102 | 1896 | President Arias | 8 | L | L | - |
| 2 | 108-15 | 103-10 | 1898 | Railroad train | 8 | L | L | - |
| 3 | 135-36 | 127 | 1909 | President Medina | 1 | L | L | - |
| 4 | 158 | 139 | 1912 | Election of President Bonilla | 1 | L | L | - |
| 5 | 167-77 | 151-61 | 1913 | Generals Sierra and Bonilla | 11 | L | L | - |
| 6 | 186-93 | 174-81 | 1915 | Ulua Bridge and Bonilla Theatre | 8 | L | T | - |
| 7 | 194 | 182 | 1916 | Re-election of President Bertrand | 1 | L | T | - |
| 8 | 196-205 | 184-93 | 1919-22 | Statue of Morazan, dated '1919' | 10 | L | T | - |
| 9 | 206-09 | 194-98 | 1920 | Assump. of power by Gen Gutierrez | 5 | L | T | - |
| 10 | 210 | 201 | 1920 | Statue of Morazan, dated '1920' | 1 | L | T | - |
| 11 | 222-26a | 218-29A | 1925 | President Paz Baraona | 6 | L | T | - |
| 12 | 247-58 | 244-55 | 1927-29 | Honduras topics | 12 | T | T | 49 |
| 13 | 0259-65 | 082-88 | 1929 | Honduras topics, official stamps | 7 | T | L | 49 |
| 14 | 259-60 | 256-57 | 1929 | Pres Colindres and V P Chavez | 2 | T | T | 49 |
| 15 | 267 | 279 | 1929 | D Herrera monument | 1 | | | - |
| 16 | 311-13 | 295-97 | 1930 | Government Gazette | 3 | T | L | 49 |
| 17 | 359-64 | 322-27 | 1933 | Flag of the Race | 6 | T | T | 49 |

## CANAL ZONE: A RENUMBERED SHEET by RICHARD YUDIN

Whilst browsing in a stamp shop near the old P.R.R. station in Panama City, I came across a few partial sheets of the 25th Anniversary issue. When going through them hunting for plate blocks I noticed that the sheet number in the margin of the only pane of the 5 cent issue had been crossed out in blue pencil, and a new number written in by the same pencil. I have never come across such a correction before or since on Canal Zone stamps, or those of any country that puts audit numbers on their sheets.

Does this mean that one more sheet was printed than was officially recorded, and that the official counts were understated by 200 stamps? Or did the numbering machine stick? Are there other sheets with corrected numbers?



# DO COVERS PROVIDE ACCURATE POSTAL HISTORY INFORMATION?

by HECTOR R MENA

This question was positively answered by Richard Saundry in his recent article in the CANL[1]. A photocopy of a cover with cancellations dated earlier than the day of first issue as reported by postal catalogues was shown. The inference was that current catalogues are providing inaccurate information on the first day of issue of the Costa Rica 5c definitive stamp of 1930 (Sc 155, SG 175).

Ernesto Quiros, the originator of the cover in question was a stamp dealer responsible for many philatelic covers of that period. Frequently the amount of postage on his covers bore little relation to the prevalent postal rate, since his main purpose was to produce philatelic covers to meet current demands. This explains the excessive amount of postage shown on that cover.

In my opinion, Gibbons and Saenz are not wrong in this particular case, despite the information derived from that cover.

The following is a transcript of the decree published in the official newspaper "La Gaceta" of February 21, 1930:

Secretary of Finance and Commerce

No.56 - San Jose, 17 February 1930.

In view of there now being ready postage stamps of CO.05 and 0.10 with the same vignettes and colours as those now in use, but of a reduced size: 3 x 2·5 centimetres,

The Constitutional President of the Republic

RESOLVES:

The use of the subject stamps is authorised. To be published.

GONZALES VIQUEZ

Secretary of Finance, Arias

I do not doubt that the Quiros cover was mailed prior to the date of the authorising decree since he probably had access to the stamps before regular postal users. I can remember another article of Dr Saundry[2] in which he found a significant lack of correlation between actual and official postal rates on modern covers. This suggests that post offices do not care much about which stamps are on a cover; as long as it carried enough postage, the cover will go to its destination.

Very few Costa Rican stamp issues were released without an authorising decree and all of them are well documented in "La Gaceta" and summarised in the Collection of Laws and Decrees compiled by the late Alvaro Bonilla Lara and published serially in Costa Rica Filatelica in early 1960. Therefore almost nothing new in this respect will be learned from equivocal information found on this philatelic cover. The same is not true for fiscal issues and postal stationary which were often released without official decree. Amongst them is the 5c and 10c set of postal stationary envelopes which is under analysis. The date has been estimated probably correctly by Beckhaus[3] and adopted by Saenz. This cover shows that the envelope was available at least by February of 1930.

Respecting other opinions in relation with this subjective matter I do not believe that philatelic covers provide accurate Costa Rican postal history information.

References

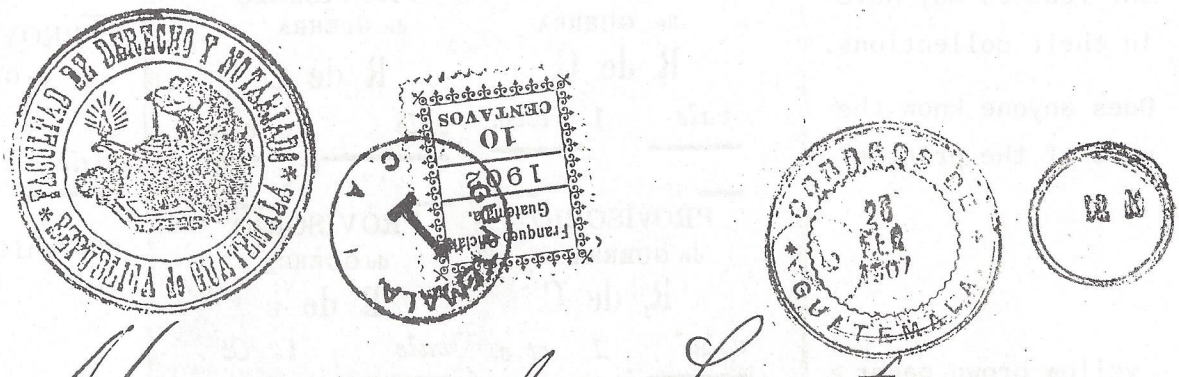
[1] Saundry R, "Costa Rica: The Probable First Day of Issue of the 5 centavos Definitive Stamp of 1930", CANL No.36, July 1989

[2] Saundry R, "An inspection of Modern Costa Rican Postal Rates" CANL No.17, September 1984

[3] Mitchell D, "Costa Rican Postal Stationary" Oxcart, 40:87, 1970

## GUATEMALA: AN UNLISTED CANCELLATION? by R Van Rompay

The illustration below is of a 10 centavos official stamp of the 1902 issue of Guatemala used on cover, dated February 26, 1907. From the Guatemala Handbooks I know that the 1902 officials on cover are rare, but what intrigues me, however, is the small single circle cancellation on the stamps. It is inscribed "Guatemala, C.A." around the edge, with the numeral "1" in the centre. I am unable to find it in the said handbooks. Can any reader help?



# NICARAGUA: FORERUNNERS OF THE POSTAL TAX STAMPS OF 1921

by KILIAN E NATHAN

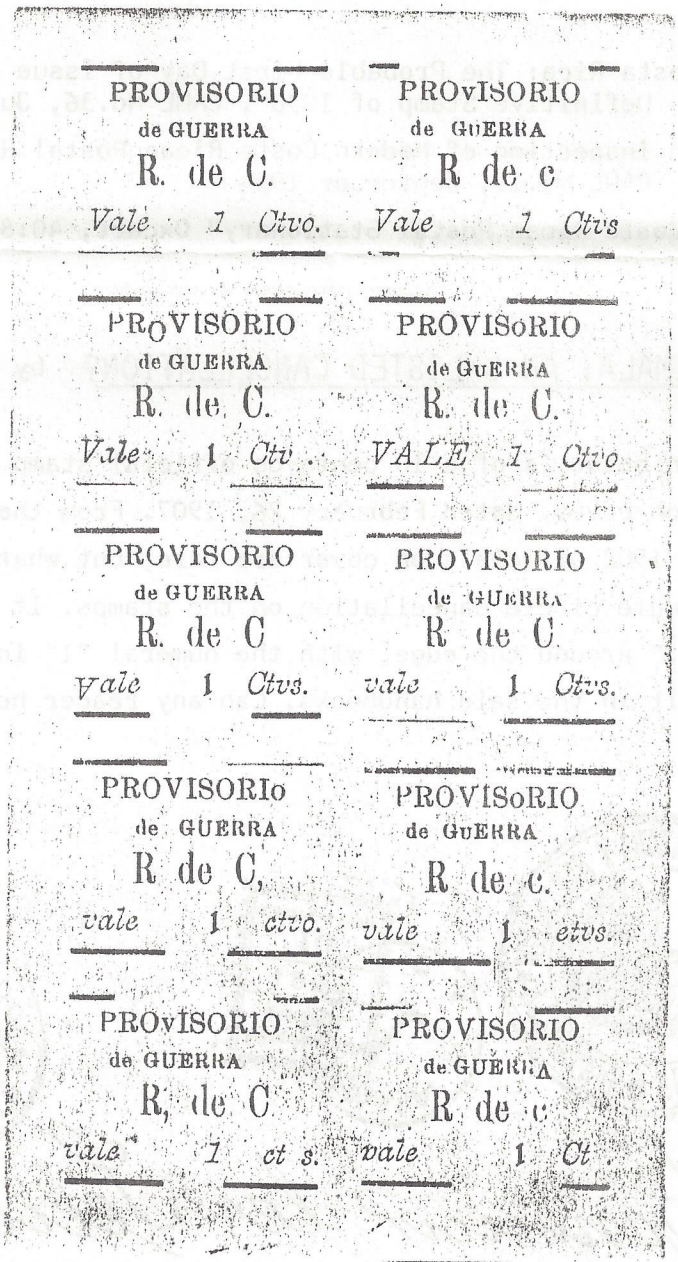
Mr Schütze, former specialist in Nicaraguan philately, told me in Managua that he remembered very well that the postal tax stamps illustrated below were officially prepared by the military for public use in 1921, but owing to political reasons these stamps were retained at the last moment. All copies were supposedly confiscated and burned, but a few sheets were saved, because the owner of the local print-shop had put them aside in a record file.

Examination of the four values shows that they were all printed from the same matrix of cliches, with just the value being changed in each case, rather like the surcharging of the railway tickets in 1911. The type is so similar that it may well be the case that the same printer did both jobs.

These stamps have to be considered as the forerunners of the postal tax stamps finally and officially issued in 1921. They are very rare (probably unique) and they are very interesting items of Nicaragua postal history.

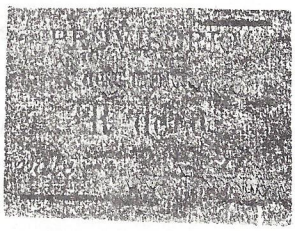
I would be very pleased to hear, via the Editor, of any similar items which our readers may have in their collections.

Does anyone know the name of the printer?

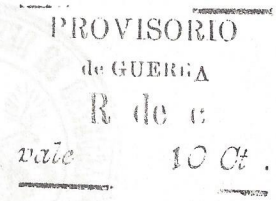

PROVISORIO de GUERRA R. de C. Vale 1 Ctvo.
PROVISORIO de GUERRA R de c Vale 1 Ctvs
PROVISORIO de GUERRA R. de C. Vale 1 Ctv.
PROVISORIO de GUERRA R. de C. VALE 1 Ctvo
PROVISORIO de GUERRA R de C Vale 1 Ctvs.
PROVISORIO de GUERRA R de C vale 1 Ctvs.
PROVISORIO de GUERRA R de C, vale 1 ctvo.
PROVISORIO de GUERRA R de c. vale 1 etvs.
PROVISORIO de GUERRA R, de C vale 1 ct s.
PROVISORIO de GUERRA R de c vale 1 Ct

yellow brown paper >

rose red paper



greyish blue paper



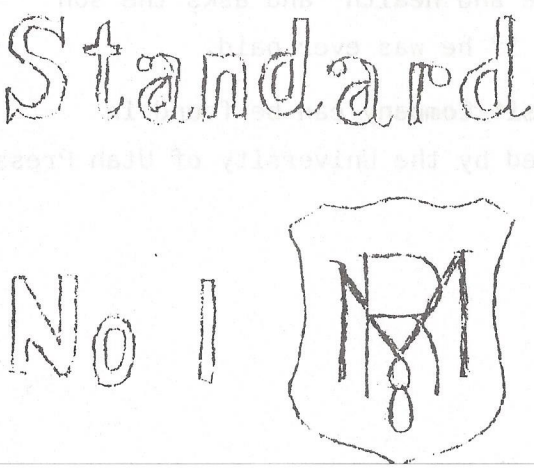

off white paper

## NICARAGUA: AN UNUSUAL CANCELLATION by KILIAN E NATHAN

I recently came across this postal stationery envelope of 1891, cancelled with a strike of DIRIOMO which I had not seen before. It looks very much like the sort of handstamp used on telegraph forms, and it is my guess that it has been used in place of the usual "Agencia Postal" canceller, which has been misplaced. The cover went from Diriomo, a little village south west of Granada, via Granada to Corinto, and bears a Granada transit and a Corinto arrival mark. It is a very interesting piece of rare postal history, and I would like to know if anyone has encountered a similar cover.

NICARAGUA: A Previously Unrecognised Watermark.

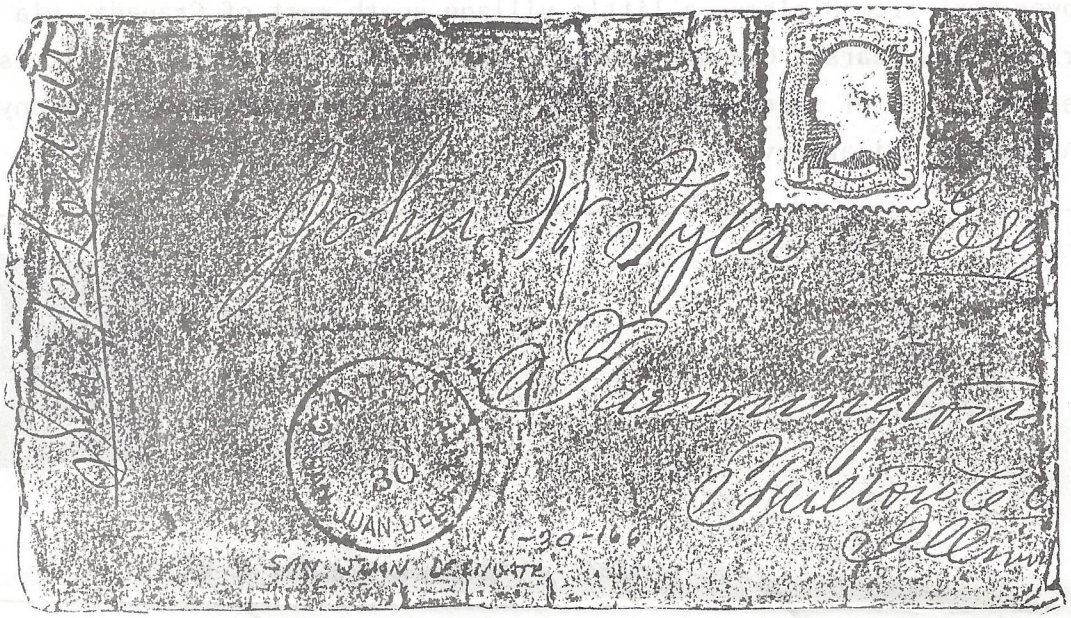
In response to Derek Pocock's request for information regarding a hitherto unknown watermark on Nicaraguan postal stationery, Harold Walker writes to say that he has also found a similar watermark on a 4c postal stationery wrapper in mint condition. A used example he has does not have the watermark.




The tracing on the left is from a Honduran wrapper in his possession. It differs from the Nicaraguan one only in the letters incorporated in the shield; 'M' and 'R' instead of 'ERCo'. Is this usual, he asks?

# NICARAGUA: A CAT Co COVER by BILL WELCH

Perhaps the enclosed cover and letter will be of interest to our readers. The letter does not belong with the cover, but explains the circumstances under which the cover presumably was mailed, via the Central American Transit Company in Nicaragua. I hope that the map will assist readers in following the story.




"Oswego March 22nd 1866

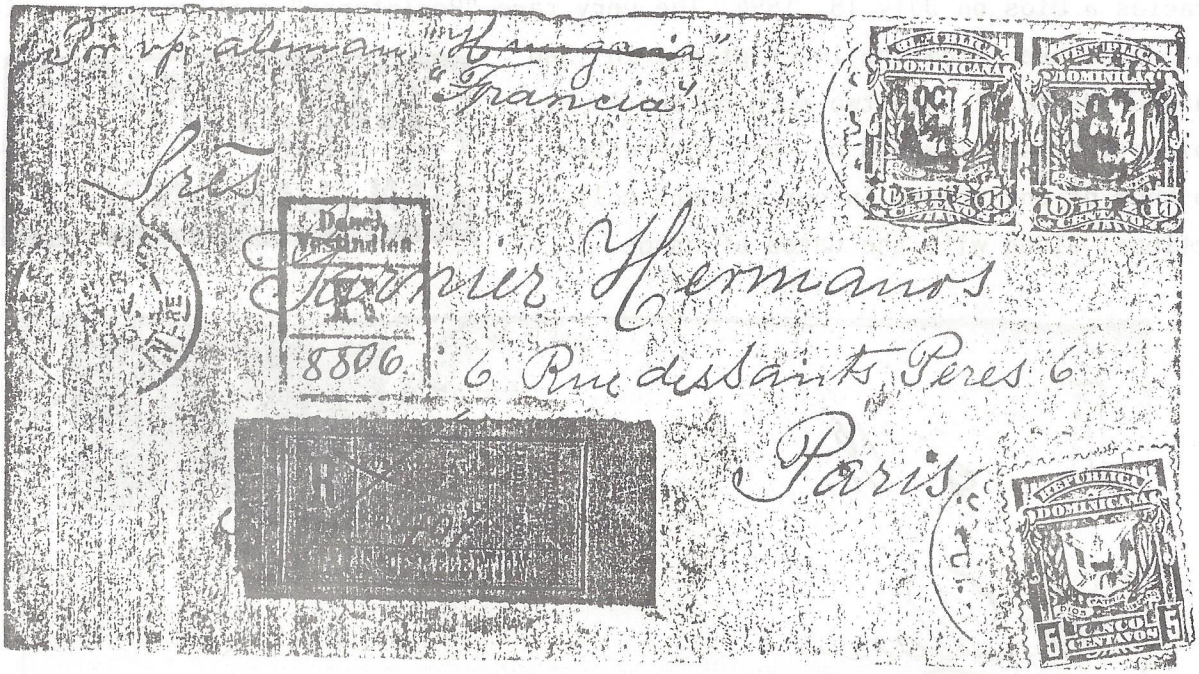
Mr Tyler -- Sir:
If you received my letter from Central America you are aware of your father's death. I will now write the particulars of that sad affair and my connection with it.

I became acquainted with your father in September. At that time he had a sore on his ankle caused by a throw from a horse. The first of October he went to another island and was exposed to the rays of a very hot sun all day. It caused inflammation to set in and he was carried home more dead than alive. He tried some time to get a doctor to amputate his leg but could not.

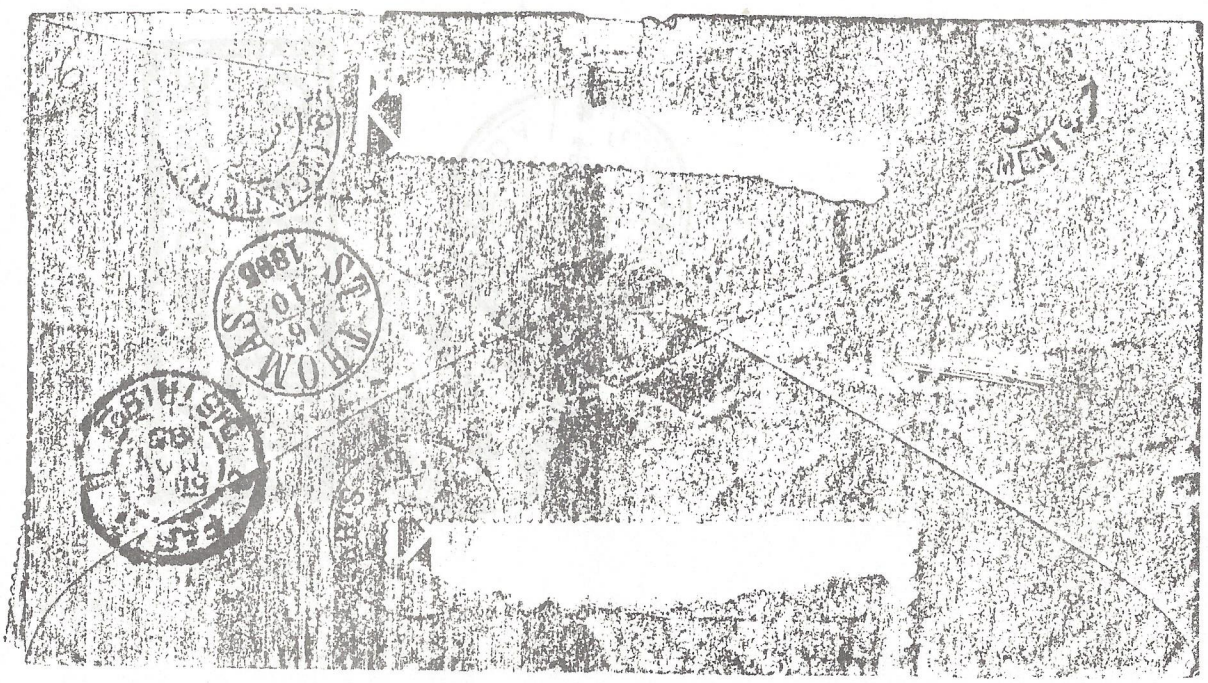
The letter goes on to describe how the sender, James Gates, had entered into a verbal agreement with the dead man, and was unable to obtain 100 dollars in wages from the dead man's estate, since he was unable to produce the necessary written agreement. He describes himself as "poor in purse and health" and asks the son to send him the 100 dollars he is owed. I wonder if he was ever paid.

A chequered history of the Central American Transit Company can be found in David I Folkman's "The Nicaraguan Route" published by the University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, 1972.

# DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: A DOUBLE REGISTRATION by R Van ROMPAY




The illustration is of the front and back of a cover from the Dominican Republic to France, registered and cancelled in the port of Puerto Plata on October 14, 1895 with arrival postmark of Paris dated November 5, 1895. The cover not only bears the aforementioned registration label, but was re-registered in the Danish West Indies, probably at St Thomas. Whilst this sort of "double registration" is common on Central American covers routed through the United States, which latter country re-registers, is it usual for covers routed through the West Indies?



# NICARAGUA: A RARE REGISTERED MARK

by KILIAN E NATHAN

Illustrated here is a very rare registered cover sent from Chinandega to Cabo Gracias a Dios on July 18, 1894. The very rare "Registered" marking was applied as can be seen from the inscription, in San Juan de Norte. I have two such covers in my collection, and I would be very interested to know of any others in our readers collections, along with the dates of usage.